

Cart Before Horse

"They have sold the long leasehold property, 58 Queen Anne Street, London, W.1, on behalf of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to the National Marriage Guid-

ance Council, for the establishment of new London Headquarters."

From the Estates Gazette this week.

PETERBOROUGH

—*Daily Telegraph*, May 27th, 1960

CORRESPONDENCE

The Eugenics Society is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents

EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—It is always important to base opinions on facts, and facts about education in Russia are now more readily available than hitherto. There are more reliable sources than the snippet of B.B.C. interview noted by Mr. Paul Bloomfield in your April issue (52, 1), and these sources make clear two things:

(a) That the Russians not only recognize individual differences of potential, but make the widest provision for developing special aptitudes—as, for example, in their ballet schools and musical conservatoires.

(b) That, despite individual differences in potential, it is the Russian teacher's job to develop each child as far as possible rather than, as our secondary school system does, to write off a high proportion as "non-academic" at an early age. This has led to a considerable negativism towards mental testing, the results of which are very often (as we see lamentably clearly in our own schools) to encourage the teacher to concentrate on measuring the child's attainment instead of concentrating on increasing it.

It is my personal view that the Russians lean over backwards in this matter, and that they might well make more use of I.Q. measures, etc. But, when one sees the vast amount of wasted ability in our schools, one sometimes wishes that we also worked on the assumption that all children are capable of all things. It is not

true, any more than it is true that most children are incapable of reaching a fair academic level, but I suspect that it is more rewarding in its pedagogic results.

If I paid a gardener to nurture the plants in my garden, and he spent all his time measuring how high they had grown, instead of getting on with the weeding and manuring and watering, I should feel somewhat indignant. Another gardener might be wrong in thinking that each seedling could become a prize plant, but if he tended them all on that assumption I should have a lovely garden.

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"LA LIMITATION DES NAISSANCES"

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—It cannot be denied that Dr. Blacker's remarks on *La Limitation des Naissances** by Père de Lestapis are of the greatest possible interest, but what this author's teaching has to do with eugenics is difficult to see and why there is no criticism of his doctrine is quite incomprehensible.

Dr. Blacker writes: "The cost in human degradation and misery could be high indeed if, in the present agonizing crisis, the ideal proved too difficult for too many." I should like to deny that Père de Lestapis's views can possibly be

* THE EUGENICS REVIEW, April 1960, 52, 2-4.